

Amendments to the Specification

Abstract

Please replace the Abstract with the following paragraph:

ABSTRACT

A soil test apparatus for testing products in subterranean soil installations including a container for receiving soil and a product to be buried therein for testing, the container having a base, sides and a top opening adapted directly or indirectly to receive a load, wherein at least one the sides is configured to permit some movement or deformation under application of the load to the soil in the container so as to simulate larger scale installation conditions.

Amendments to the Specification, continued.

Please amend paragraph [0023] as follows:

[0023] Figure 1a is a schematic plan view of a flexible walled miniature soil test box in accordance with a first embodiment of the invention;

Please add the following new paragraph after paragraph [0023]:

[0023.1] Figure 1b is a schematic plan view of a flexible walled miniature soil test box, post loading, in accordance with a first embodiment of the invention;

Please amend paragraph [0043] as follows:

[0023] Figure 2a is a schematic front view of the soil test box shown in Figure 1a;

Please add the following new paragraph after paragraph [0024]:

[0024.1] Figure 2b is a schematic front view of the soil test box shown in Figure 1b;

Please replace the first sentence of paragraph [0028] with the revised sentence as follows:

[0028] Referring to figures 1-3 1a, 1b, 2a, 2b, and 3, one embodiment of the invention provides a soil test box 1 specifically configured for use in testing pipes.

Please amend paragraph [0029] as follows:

[0029] In a preferred embodiment, the fixed rigid side plates 4 may be made of a transparent material such as plexiglass which if necessary can be supported by a metal lattice (not shown) secured to the frame 2. In other embodiments, the wall may be steel or a similar structural material, with only a smaller viewing window 30 as shown in Figure 2a and 2b. In yet another embodiment, the side plates 4 include an opening 31 for accessing the interior of a test article, such as the pipe 13 shown in Figure 2a and 2b. An optional top late 14 may also be provided as part of the test box.

Please amend the first sentence of paragraph [0030] to include the phrase “in Figures 1a and 2a” as follows:

[0030] In use, the test box is set up with a predetermined number of leaf springs 8 in the form of strips of spring steel of a known spring rating which are then connected to the movable end plates 7 as shown in Figures 1a and 2a.

Please amend the first sentence of paragraph [0032] to include the phrase “(as shown in Figures 1a and 2a)” as follows:

[0032] In a preferred form, the loaded test box with top plate 14 attached (as shown in Figures 1a and 2a) is then positioned under a suitable loading apparatus such as a “Universal” testing machine, which applies a load to the top plate.

Please amend the second sentence of paragraph [0033] to include the phrase “, as shown in Figures 1b and 2b” as follows:

[0033] As the load is applied to the contents of the container, the filler modulus changes and the test article deforms as part of the load is transferred horizontally. This also causes the end plates 7 to move slightly outwardly against the known biasing force of the springs 8, as shown in Figures 1b and 2b.

Please replace paragraph [0035] with the following amended paragraph below:

[0035] Optionally, the test box can be used for other testing procedures. For example, the test box could be filled with a predetermined amount of moisture, and the contents frozen by using, for example, cooling coils, a cooling jacket or a freezer, in order to test performance under freeze-thaw conditions. Other embodiments of the invention may include water delivery means 32 (not shown) for varying the moisture content of the filler material during the test. The apparatus may also include integral heating and/or cooling systems 33.